

Members:

Rep. Paul Robertson, Chair
Rep. Dennis Avery
Rep. Greg Porter
Rep. Cleo Duncan
Rep. Robert Hoffman
Rep. Rich McClain
Sen. Teresa Lubbers, V. Chair
Sen. Robert Meeks
Sen. Greg Server
Sen. Mark Blade
Sen. Billie Breaux
Sen. Connie Sipes



INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION ISSUES

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Authority: Legislative Council Resolution 2-1998

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: June 24, 1998
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., 156-B
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Rep. Paul Robertson, Chair; Rep. Dennis Avery; Rep. Greg Porter; Rep. Robert Hoffman; Rep. Rich McClain; Sen. Teresa Lubbers; Sen. Robert Meeks; Sen. Greg Server; Sen. Mark Blade; Sen. Billie Breaux; Sen. Connie Sipes.

Members Absent: Rep. Cleo Duncan.

Chair Robertson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE LAST MINUTES

The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from June 10, 1998 by voice vote.

TESTIMONY ON THE FUNDING OF OPTIONAL FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Kathy Smith, Executive Assistant, Office of the Governor

Ms. Smith stated that optional full-day kindergarten will be a high priority for the Governor's Office in the 1999 legislative session. She explained that it is a logical step in doing more for early childhood education.

Ms. Smith made reference to Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation's successes with full-day kindergarten. She also referenced a longitudinal study conducted by the corporation which illustrates how well its students, with a full-day kindergarten background, do in middle school.

Chair Robertson stated that he is glad optional full-day kindergarten is a priority for the Governor. He added that it is also a priority for the Indiana General Assembly.

Senator Server asked Ms. Smith if the Governor's Office has discussed incentives for after school day care as part of a safe schools program. She stated that she would obtain this information and make it available to the Committee.

Terry Spradlin, Legislative Liaison, Department of Education

Mr. Spradlin distributed an information packet to the Committee regarding full-day kindergarten.¹

Mr. Spradlin stated that the Department of Education (DOE) supports optional full-day kindergarten. He explained that parents should have the option of sending their children to a full-day program, and that school corporations should have time to plan for its implementation as it impacts teaching staff, costs, etc. Mr. Spradlin added that DOE views optional full-day kindergarten as a means of providing effective early childhood development.

Mr. Spradlin stated that optional full-day kindergarten will have a significant fiscal impact. He explained that DOE will work with Legislative Services Agency (LSA) to develop a fiscal impact for the Committee.

At this point, Chair Robertson asked Mark Goodpaster, LSA, to present preliminary fiscal information regarding full-day kindergarten. Mr. Goodpaster distributed a memorandum and enrollment figures to the Committee and explained both pieces of information.²

In response to comments from the Committee, Representative Robertson stated that by late summer to early fall, the Committee will have more definitive fiscal estimates from Legislative Services Agency and DOE. He added that the fiscal aspect of full-day kindergarten, at this point, is a “work-in-progress”.

Terry Spradlin concluded by stating that the figures produced by Legislative Services Agency represent a maximum and that, together, LSA and DOE will provide a range of expenditure estimates.

Mary Beth Morgan, Primetime Coordinator, Department of Education

Ms. Morgan emphasized that DOE is interested in improving the quality of the kindergarten program as opposed to simply extending it to a full day. She stated that full-day kindergarten programs allow teachers to get to know children well, and allows teachers to implement developmentally appropriate curriculum.

She stated that as DOE looks at supporting full-day kindergarten, it also looks at ways of developing appropriate curriculum to improve the quality of kindergarten education.

Larry Carlson, Superintendent; Alisa Mathas and Donna Gilman, Kindergarten Teachers; South Vermillion Community School Corporation

Dr. Carlson distributed information on South Vermillion Community School Corporation’s full-day kindergarten pilot program.³

Ms. Mathas and Ms. Gilman explained that this program is an at-risk program involving children who are at risk of academic failure. They stated that a screening procedure was used to select fourteen of the lowest achieving students.

Ms. Mathas and Ms. Gilman stated that the results of this program have been very favorable, and that parent involvement has been quite significant.

Phil Schoffstall, Superintendent; Cathlin Gray, Principal; Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation

Dr. Schoffstall distributed a 1980 study on full-day kindergarten, a 1996-97 annual report, and kindergarten revenue figures to the Committee.⁴

Dr. Schoffstall and Cathlin Gray explained the contents of the distributed information, and gave a brief

¹ Copies of Mr. Spradlin’s materials are on file in the Legislative Information Center, Room 230 of the State House, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204. The telephone number of the Legislative Information Center is (317) 232-9856.

² Copies of Mark Goodpaster’s materials are on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

³ Copies of Dr. Carlson’s materials are on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

⁴ Copies of Dr. Schoffstall’s materials are on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

history of full-day kindergarten in Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation. They stated that each year, their school corporation scores higher on standardized tests, and has more academic honors graduates than any other urban school corporation in Indiana.

Senator Lubbers asked Dr. Schoffstall if he has access to retention figures, and indicated that they would be helpful. He stated that he would obtain this information for the Committee.

Senator Server made a reference to after school day care, and asked if Dr. Schoffstall's school corporation offers such a program. Dr. Schoffstall responded that his school corporation offers an after school program and that parents pay for the services. He stated that there are approximately 4,000 children in the day care program.

Cathlin Gray added that she knows of no better program than full-day kindergarten in providing benefits to children. She concluded that the school corporation works hard to have a developmentally appropriate program in her school.

Pat Pritchett, Superintendent; Nancy Beaty, Administrator; Ruby Matthew and Laura Highsmith, Kindergarten Teachers; Indianapolis Public Schools

Dr. Pritchett distributed a video tape as well as data regarding IPS's full-day kindergarten program.⁵

Dr. Pritchett explained that full-day kindergarten is cost beneficial in that it reduces the cost of student retention and remediation. He stated that he supports optional full-day kindergarten, and that students who participate in such a program achieve a higher level of reading readiness. He added that IPS parents are very supportive of full-day kindergarten.

At this point, Nancy Beaty explained the handouts, and indicated that she could be contacted for further clarification.

Ruby Matthew and Laura Highsmith described the types of topics and processes that the teachers cover in full-day kindergarten classes. They stated that teachers are able to provide more for children in a full-day program, which are not possible in a half day program.

Laura Highsmith stated that there is much appreciation on the part of working parents for the full-day program. She noted that she is aware of parents who have children in a full-day program who are able to work. She stated that she sees this as a benefit to children, especially children from low income families.

Both Ms. Highsmith and Ms. Matthew stated that a full-day program allows them to accomplish more "one-on-one" interaction with a child than what can be done in a half day program. They also stated that full-day programs also help first grade teachers since the children are already accustomed to a full day at school.

Ray Klotz, President, Parent Advisory Committee; Guy Dillard, Shelia Donis, and Marcia Jackson, Principals; Vigo County School Corporation

Mr. Klotz stated that he supports optional full-day kindergarten. He explained that in rural areas, it is difficult to get children to and from half day programs. He stated that he believes full-day kindergarten programs provide a strong academic foundation for children.

He stated that Vigo County School Corporation has had a full-day kindergarten program for the last five years but that it may be scaled back due to budget cuts.

Mr. Dillard briefly described what can be accomplished in a full-day kindergarten program that cannot be accomplished in a half day program. He explained that extended projects can be undertaken, and that subjects like music drama can be provided. He indicated that a more relaxed atmosphere can be created in a full-day program, and that transportation problems can be eliminated.

⁵ Copies of Dr. Pritchett's materials are on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

He added that kindergarten attendance has improved with full-day kindergarten in that parents are less likely to take kids out of school if they are in a full-day program. He stated that full-day programs offer opportunities to provide immediate follow-up for field trips, and provide opportunities for children to get to know one another better.

Mr. Dillard concluded by describing success stories of children both academically and socially.

Ms. Donnis and Ms. Jackson both described their experiences and success stories with full-day kindergarten and gave their support for fully funded optional full-day kindergarten.

Brad Case, Superintendent; Alan Drew, Principal, South Knox School Corporation

Dr. Case and Mr. Drew both distributed outlines reflecting their presentations.⁶

Dr. Case and Mr. Drew explained that full-day kindergarten programs provide an opportunity to develop an appropriate curriculum for kindergarten students. They explained that South Knox School Corporation will offer a full-day kindergarten program at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year.

They indicated that without additional funding, the full-day program will be a burden to the school corporation's general fund. They encouraged Committee support for the funding of optional full-day kindergarten.

Victor Smith, IUPUI

Dr. Smith presented survey results regarding the number of school corporations that would offer a full-day kindergarten program if funding were available from the State.⁷

Of the 263 superintendents responding to Dr. Smith's survey, 58% indicated that their school corporation would offer a full-day program. Dr. Smith discussed the number of additional students that school corporations would expect to receive if they provided a full-day kindergarten program.

Dr. Smith's survey generated Committee discussion regarding the cost of fully funding optional full-day kindergarten. Representative Robertson reiterated that final figures would be forthcoming.

Maureen Jayne, Parents for Public Education

Ms. Jayne stated that, in her opinion, children experience stress in later academic years due to the lack of a positive kindergarten experience. She explained that a full-day program would benefit children greatly.

She indicated that the subject of fully funding optional full-day kindergarten is not about money but about children. She stated that parents value the education that their children receive, and that parents are depending on the Committee to support this proposal.

Sally Flood, Indiana State PTA

Ms. Flood stated that she believes tax dollars will be saved in the long run by fully funding optional full-day kindergarten. She explained that she believes less money will have to be spent on correctional facilities if children receive a positive kindergarten experience.

She expressed that fully funding this program would be wise stewardship.

James Elicker, Assistant Professor of Child Development and Family Studies, Purdue University

Dr. Elicker distributed an outline of his presentation to the Committee regarding his work on full-day

⁶Copies of Dr. Case's and Mr. Drew's handouts are on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

⁷Copies of Dr. Smith's survey are on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

kindergarten.⁸

Dr. Elicker discussed the background, findings, and conclusions of his 1997 Wisconsin study of full-day kindergarten. He stated that although the results of his study were favorable in supporting the importance of full-day kindergarten, he indicated that full-day kindergarten is not a "silver bullet".

Representative Robertson asked Dr. Elicker to provide his findings to the Committee regarding a study being conducted on later successes of full-day kindergarten students. Dr. Elicker stated that he would make this information available to the General Assembly.

Sandra Chappel, President, Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children (ISEYC)

Ms. Chappel stated that her organization sees the need for a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children in full-day kindergarten programs. She also stated that ISEYC is a proponent of a September 1 cutoff date for kindergarten enrollment.

She stated that ISEYC is in favor of fully funding optional full-day kindergarten.

Mary Boggs, Indianapolis

Ms. Boggs stated that she believes full-day kindergarten is critical to the development of children. She explained that low student achievement results in an expense to our society, and that remediation at the upper grades gives little back to society. She stated that she believes an investment in the lower grades is essential for the success of children.

Ms. Boggs concluded that money spent now can reduce the need for remedial services and alternative schools in the future.

Frank Bush, Indiana School Boards Association

Mr. Bush stated that the Indiana School Boards Association supports full-day kindergarten on an optional basis.

Tracy Dust, Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents

Mr. Dust stated that the Indiana Association of Public Superintendents has had a long standing resolution supporting the funding of optional full day kindergarten.

Norma Kacen, Indiana State Teachers Association

Ms. Kacen distributed a summary of her organization's support for optional full-day kindergarten.⁹

Gail Pluta, Indiana Federation of Teachers

Ms. Pluta was not available but provided the Committee with a summary of her organization's support for optional full-day kindergarten.¹⁰

FINAL BUSINESS AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Chair Robertson stated that the next meeting will be held on July 8, 1998 at 10:00 a.m. He indicated that he will allow individuals who are opponents of the funding of optional full-day kindergarten to speak at the fourth committee meeting on July 22, 1998.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

⁸ Copies of Dr. Elicker's materials are on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

⁹ Copies of Ms. Kacen's handout are on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

¹⁰ Copies of Ms. Pluta's handouts are on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).